



# Wellness by the Month

## CHASE THOSE WINTER BLUES

If the grey days and lack of sunshine make you feel a little “blue” you may be one of the half million people in the United States that suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder or **SAD** (winter depression). January and February seem to be the worst months.

Researchers believe that SAD is caused by the decreasing amount of sunlight that we are exposed to during the winter months. A sleep-related hormone called melatonin is produced at increased levels during the darker days. This hormone has been linked to depression.

### Symptoms:

- ◇ Fatigue
- ◇ Weight gain
- ◇ Trouble concentrating
- ◇ Tired
- ◇ Decreased energy level
- ◇ Irritability
- ◇ Lack of interest in normal activities/ social withdrawal
- ◇ Craving sweet or starchy foods

### Treatments:

#### Natural Light therapy

Increasing exposure to sunlight can help reduce the effects of SAS – sometimes in only a couple of days. Try to get outdoors and walk when the sun is shining. Sit by a window at work or home whenever possible.

#### Replace Light Bulbs

Replacing some of the light bulbs in your house with full-spectrum bulbs provides the closest thing to natural sunlight.

The sun at noon on a clear day emits 100,000 lux; the lights in your home are 100 to 200 lux. (A lux is one unit of illumination.)

#### Use a Light Box

Bright light boxes deliver fluorescent light up to 25,000 lux. The timing, duration and intensity can be adjusted for optimum results. These boxes can be found in medical supply stores, health food stores or at

[www.lighttherapyproducts.com](http://www.lighttherapyproducts.com)